



APEX ENGLISH

Your voice. Global.

B1 · GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT 5 · B1·5B

Learning

Theme · Work & study



Unit 5 · B1·5B

Learning

Theme: Work & study

B1 · General English



Learning objectives

- Talk about past habits related to studying and learning.
- Use 'used to' and 'would' for past habits and repeated actions.
- Compare how you USED to learn with how you learn NOW.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Class Book

Warm-up · Your school desk at 12

Close your eyes and picture your school desk when you were 12. In **THREE** sentences: what was on it, what you were probably doing there, and one small memory from that year.

One object on the desk.

One subject you loved (or hated).

One classmate you still think about.

Lead-in · This or that

Read each learning dilemma. Choose A or B. There is no wrong answer — reveal to see **WHY** each side has fans.

1. For a new language: (a) an app for 15 min a day, or (b) 90-minute weekly class with a teacher.

2. For a hard topic: (a) read the same chapter three times, or (b) close the book and try to explain it out loud.

3. Best time to study a difficult subject: (a) first thing in the morning, or (b) late at night.

4. For remembering vocabulary: (a) write each word 10 times, or (b) use each word 3 times in real sentences.

5. For a difficult concept: (a) study alone in silence, or (b) explain it to a friend.

followUp: Which of these dilemmas do you struggle with the most? Which strategy will you try this week?

Reading · How I used to study — and why I stopped

When I was at school, I used to study the wrong way — very confidently. I would sit at my desk with a highlighter and highlight almost every sentence in the book. I would re-read the same chapter three times. I would copy vocabulary lists ten times each. It felt like real work. It even **LOOKED** like real work. And I passed my exams.

But five years later, I remembered almost none of it. My highlighted books were pretty, and my copied lists were long. My actual knowledge was thin.

In university, a good teacher told me the secret. 'Close the book,' she said, 'and try to tell me what you just read. That is studying. Everything else is decorating.' It felt strange at first. It was uncomfortable. I would forget things and feel stupid. But six months later, I remembered more than I ever had before. Now, whenever I want to really learn something, I close the book. It's the smallest habit change I've ever

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made, and the most important.

1. What was the writer's old way of studying?
 - (A) Only using an app
 - (B) Highlighting, re-reading and copying lists
 - (C) Only asking questions
2. What was wrong with that method?
 - (A) It took too long
 - (B) It looked productive but built weak memory
 - (C) It was too expensive
3. What is the teacher's secret?
 - (A) Read the chapter three times
 - (B) Close the book and try to explain it
 - (C) Highlight only the important sentences

Vocabulary in context

Match the phrase to its meaning.

highlighter — a marker used to colour important text

chapter — a numbered section of a book

vocabulary list — a written list of words to learn

decorating — making something look nice without changing what matters

True / False / Not Given

Based only on the text.

1. The writer failed most of her school exams.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given
2. Highlighting everything is very effective.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given
3. The writer felt uncomfortable with the new method at first.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given

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4. Her teacher was a language teacher.

- (A) True
- (B) False
- (C) Not Given

React to the text

Answer in 2–3 sentences.

1. How did YOU use to study at school? Which habits were 'decoration' and which really worked?

2. What is ONE learning habit you'd like to change this year?

Scan for meaning

Find the word or phrase from the text.

1. a marker used to colour important text

2. a numbered section of a book

3. making something look nice but not fundamentally better

Vocabulary · Study & learning

review — study again what you already covered (esp. before an exam)

cram (informal for intensive last-minute study) — study a huge amount in a short time (usually last-minute)

take notes — write short summaries as you listen or read

focus — concentrate on one thing

distraction — something that pulls attention away

study group — a small group of learners who work together regularly

get the hang of it — start to understand or do something well

pick up (a skill) — learn a skill without formal teaching

brush up on — improve a skill you already have but have forgotten

fall behind — not keep up with the group / schedule

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catch up — reach the level of others after being behind

pass / fail an exam — succeed / not succeed in an exam

practice

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the lists.

1. I ____ Chinese from watching films, not from a class.

2. I need to ____ ____ ____ my Spanish before the trip.

3. I always ____ notes in blue and highlight in yellow.

4. It took a month, but I finally ____ ____ ____ ____ ____.

5. I ____ during my third semester — I had to repeat two subjects.

6. I ____ ____ in the summer and ____ my final exams.

Collocations · verbs + study nouns

Match each verb with the noun it usually goes with.

sit — an exam / a test

take — a course / notes / an exam

do — homework / research / an assignment

get — a good mark / feedback / a certificate

hand in — an essay / a project / your homework

Odd one out

Choose the word that does NOT belong.

1. review · study · cram (informal for intensive last-minute study) · sing

(A) review

(B) study

(C) cram (informal for intensive last-minute study)

(D) sing

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2. distraction · focus · concentration · flower

(A) distraction

(B) focus

(C) concentration

(D) flower

3. brush up on · pick up · get the hang of · run away

(A) brush up on

(B) pick up

(C) get the hang of

(D) run away

Word building · verb ↔ noun

Complete each pair.

1. learn → the person: ____

2. teach → the person: ____

3. study → the person: ____

4. know → the noun: ____



Grammar · Used to / would for past habits

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1. Used to + infinitive — a past habit or state that is no longer true — Works for BOTH repeated actions AND states. • I used to walk to school every day. (repeated action) • I used to live in Berlin. (state) • She didn't use to like coffee. (negative)

2. Would + infinitive — repeated actions in the past (NOT states) — 'Would' works for repeated ACTIONS only, not states. • On Sundays, my grandmother would bake bread. ✓ • ✗ I would live in Berlin. → ✓ I used to live in Berlin. (state)

3. Common trap: 'use to' vs 'used to' — Positive: used to. Negative / Question: use to (no 'd'). • I used to smoke. • I didn't use to smoke. • Did you use to smoke?

4. Compare with 'be used to + -ing' (very different!) — 'Be used to + -ing' = to be accustomed to (still true now). • I'm used to waking up at 5. (I do it now, and it's normal for me.)

Exercise A — used to or didn't use to?

Complete each sentence.

1. I ____ walk to school every day.

2. She ____ like vegetables — now she eats them all the time.

3. ____ play a musical instrument when you were younger?

4. We ____ live in a small village near the mountains.

5. He ____ get up early — he was famous for sleeping in.

Exercise B — used to or would?

Complete with the correct form. Both may be possible; if only one works, use that one.

1. On Saturday mornings, my mother ____ (make) pancakes.

2. I ____ (live) in Berlin for three years.

3. Every summer we ____ (spend) two weeks at my grandparents' house.

4. I ____ (be) very shy as a child.

5. My father ____ (tell) us bedtime stories every night.

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**Exercise C — Find and fix the mistake**

Each sentence has ONE mistake.

1. I use to live in Paris.

2. Did you used to smoke?

3. I would be very shy as a child.

4. She didn't used to like coffee.

Exercise D — Rewrite with used to or would

Rewrite each sentence to talk about a past habit.

1. In the past, I walked to school every day. →

2. Ten years ago, she was very quiet. →

3. Every Sunday, we visited my grandmother. →

Exercise E — About you

Answer with a full sentence using 'used to' or 'would'.

1. What is one hobby you used to have but don't anymore?

2. What did your family use to do on Sundays when you were a child?

3. What is one thing you didn't use to like but now love?

Exercise F — Complete the memory

Complete each gap.

1. When I was 10, I ____ (live) in a small town by the sea. Every Saturday morning, my father ____ (take) me to the market, and we ____ (eat) fresh bread on the way home.

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2. I ____ ____ ____ (not / like) my school uniform — it was scratchy and grey. But I ____ (love) my English teacher; she ____ (tell) us stories in every class.

Listening · Old classmates catching up

Two old school friends meet by chance at a café, fifteen years after leaving school. They immediately start comparing memories.

pre

Do you keep in touch with your school friends? Why or why not?

What is the ONE teacher you still remember, good OR bad?

gist

1. How long has it been since Voice A and Voice B last saw each other?

2. What was Voice A's favourite teacher like?

3. How does the conversation end?

detail

1. Where did Voice B use to sit in class?

2. What subject did Voice A hate?

3. What does Voice A do now?

Third listen — read between the lines

Answer from what is IMPLIED.

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1. Are they genuinely happy to see each other, or just being polite?

2. Has Voice A really changed since school?

Useful language from the audio

Match each phrase to what it does.

"It's been ages!" — warm greeting after long absence

"I used to sit at the back." — past habitual state

"She would give us tests every Monday." — past repeated action

"I didn't use to like maths." — past state that has changed

"Let's exchange numbers." — warm signal to stay in touch

Voice A: Wait — is that you? It's been ages!

Voice B: Oh my — fifteen years? I'd know your laugh anywhere.

Voice A: Sit down, sit down. Do you remember Room 12? Miss Alves?

Voice B: Of course. She would give us those surprise tests every Monday morning.

Voice A: Every single Monday. I used to hide in the toilets before Friday maths — do you remember?

Voice B: You WHAT? I never knew that!

Voice A: Nobody did. I've never told anyone. And you know what I do now? I teach maths. Same school.

Voice B: You DON'T. That's the best thing I've heard all year.

Voice A: I became the boring adult I promised never to be.

Voice B: You're not boring. Where did you use to sit? Wait — front row, right side. I remember.

Voice A: That's right. And you — back row, by the window, always looking outside.

Voice B: Guilty. I would daydream about anything but algebra.

Voice A: Listen — some of the old class meet for dinner every couple of months. Next one is the second Saturday of the month. Come.

Voice B: Let's exchange numbers. I'm in.

Fourth listen — fill the gaps

Listen again and complete the exact phrases.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



1. It's been ____!

2. She ____ give us surprise tests every Monday.

3. I ____ ____ hide in the toilets before Friday maths.

4. Where did you ____ ____ sit?

Speaking · Then and now

In pairs, take turns. Student A: describe your daily life when you were 12. Student B: describe your daily life now. Compare using at least 3 'used to' and 2 'would' constructions.

Scene: Your childhood weekend vs your adult weekend

A: You: describe a Saturday when you were 12.

B: You: describe a Saturday now.

Scene: How you used to consume music vs how you consume it now

A: You: 12 years old, one Walkman/one radio.

B: You: today, streaming everywhere.

Scene: How you used to communicate with friends vs now

A: You: 12 years old, house phone and notes in class.

B: You: today, group chats and voice notes.

Discussion · learning

Choose 2 questions and speak for 30–45 seconds each.

What is the best thing a teacher has ever said to you?

Is school better today than when you were a student?

What is one skill you've picked up entirely online?

If you could learn ONE new skill in the next 12 months, what would it be?

Role-play · Career-changer meets old teacher

Read your role, prepare, then run the conversation for 2 minutes.

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Scene: You bump into your favourite school teacher 10 years later

A: You: the former student. Tell them what you used to want to be, what actually happened, and what you're doing now.

B: You: the teacher. Remember them warmly, ask honest questions, and offer ONE piece of advice from your years of teaching.

Mini-presentation · 60-second 'me at 12'

Prepare and deliver a 60-second portrait of yourself at age 12.

Beat 1 (10s) — Where you used to live, in one sentence.

Beat 2 (15s) — Two things you would do every week that you don't do anymore.

Beat 3 (20s) — One thing you didn't use to like but now love (or vice versa).

Beat 4 (15s) — One thing from that year that is still true about you today.

sample: When I was 12, I used to live in a small flat in a very noisy street in São Paulo, above a bakery. Every Saturday morning, my father would take me to the football pitch, and every Sunday afternoon we would go to my grandmother's for lunch. I didn't use to like reading — my parents used to bribe me with chocolate to finish one book a month. Now I read almost every night before bed. But one thing has stayed exactly the same: I still eat pão de queijo for breakfast whenever I can find one.

Writing · A short 'me at 12' post

Write 70–100 words about your life at 12. Use at least 3 'used to' and 2 'would' constructions. End with ONE thing that has NOT changed about you.

bonus: Bonus — Rewrite the same portrait as a short poem of 6 lines, one memory per line.

Wrap-up · What did we cover?

USED TO + infinitive = past habit or state, no longer true.

WOULD + infinitive = past repeated action ONLY (not for states).

In negatives / questions, 'use to' (no 'd').

Active recall > passive re-reading. Close the book and try to explain it out loud.

Quiz

1. "I ____ live in Berlin." (past habit / state)

(A) would

(B) used to

(C) am used to

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2. "Every Sunday, my grandmother ____ bake bread."

- (A) would
- (B) used to be
- (C) is used to

3. Choose the correct form.

- (A) Did you used to smoke?
- (B) Did you use to smoke?
- (C) Do you used to smoke?

4. 'Cram' means...

- (A) study a huge amount last-minute
- (B) revise slowly for months
- (C) skip the exam

5. "She ____ like coffee — now she loves it."

- (A) used to
- (B) didn't use to
- (C) wouldn't

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Workbook — home practice



1. Vocabulary recall

Complete each sentence with the best word.

1. Write ONE new word from the lesson and its meaning in your own words.

2. Write ONE collocation from the lesson and use it in a sentence about your life.

3. Write ONE phrase you'd use in real conversation this week.

2. Grammar practice · used to / would for past habits

Rewrite each sentence using the target grammar of this lesson.

1. Sentence 1 → rewrite it correctly with the target grammar.

2. Sentence 2 → rewrite it correctly with the target grammar.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



3. Sentence 3 → find and fix ONE mistake.

4. Sentence 4 → complete the gap with the correct form.

5. Sentence 5 → write your own example, true about you.

3. Reading recall

Look back at the class-book reading. Answer briefly in your own words.

1. What was the main idea in ONE sentence?

2. What is ONE opinion of the writer you agree with?

3. What is ONE opinion you disagree with, and why?

4. Listening · a follow-up dialogue

Two voices talk about work & study for about a minute. Notice the target grammar in use.

1. What is the main topic of the conversation?

2. Who sounds more confident and why?

3. Which target-grammar phrase appears TWICE in the audio?

Voice A: So — tell me about your work & study this week. Anything different?

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Voice B: Honestly, yes. I've been trying something new — and it's changed how I feel completely.

Voice A: Give me one specific example — I want the small detail, not the big story.

Voice B: OK: I stopped checking my phone before bed. Just that. And I already sleep better.

5. Writing · a short reflection

Write 70–100 words about the theme of this lesson. Use at least 2 examples of the target grammar and 3 words from the vocabulary list.

6. Reflection

Look back at your notes from class. Answer briefly.

1. What is ONE thing from this lesson you already use naturally?

2. What is ONE thing you'd like to practise more this week? How exactly?

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Answer key — Class Book

Lead-in · This or that

1. Best answer: BOTH. Apps for consistency (grammar, vocab); teacher for feedback, speaking, real conversation. Alone, apps plateau; classes without daily practice fade.
2. (b) — 'active recall' (retrieval practice) beats re-reading in almost every study. If you can't explain it out loud, you don't really understand it yet.
3. Depends on YOUR chronotype. Most people concentrate best 1–2 hours after waking, but 'night owls' do their best deep work after 9 p.m. Work WITH your body, not against it.
4. (b) — use in context beats copying every time. Copying feels productive but doesn't build memory. Making your own sentences does.
5. Both help — but 'teaching' is often the fastest path to real understanding ('the protégé effect'). If nobody is around, teach the concept out loud to an empty chair.

Reading · How I used to study — and why I stopped

1. (B) Highlighting, re-reading and copying lists
2. (B) It looked productive but built weak memory
3. (B) Close the book and try to explain it
1. (B) False
2. (B) False
3. (A) True
4. (C) Not Given
1. Model: I used to copy every word on the board — total decoration. What actually worked was studying in pairs the day before the exam and trying to explain everything out loud.
2. Model: I want to stop watching videos passively. From now on, I'll pause every 5 minutes and try to summarise what I just heard.
1. highlighter
2. chapter
3. decorating

Vocabulary · Study & learning

1. picked up
2. brush up on
3. take
4. got the hang of it
5. fell behind
6. caught up / passed
1. (D) sing
2. (D) flower
3. (D) run away
1. learner
2. teacher
3. student
4. knowledge

Grammar · Used to / would for past habits

1. used to
2. didn't use to
3. Did you use to
4. used to
5. didn't use to
1. would make / used to make
2. used to live (state — not 'would')
3. would spend / used to spend
4. used to be (state — not 'would')
5. would tell / used to tell

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



1. I used to live in Paris.
2. Did you use to smoke?
3. I used to be very shy as a child. (states → used to, not would)
4. She didn't use to like coffee.
1. I used to walk to school every day. / I would walk to school every day.
2. She used to be very quiet.
3. Every Sunday, we used to / would visit my grandmother.
1. Model: I used to play the piano every day when I was 12 — I haven't touched one in years.
2. Model: on Sundays, we would go to my grandmother's house for a huge lunch — three courses, no phones.
3. Model: I didn't use to like coffee. Now I can't start my morning without one.
1. used to live / would take / would eat
2. didn't use to like / used to love (state) / would tell

Listening · Old classmates catching up

1. Fifteen years — since the end of school.
2. Very strict — she would give surprise tests every Monday morning.
3. They exchange numbers and agree to have dinner with a small group of old classmates next month.
1. Right at the back, near the window — she would look outside and daydream.
2. Maths — she used to hide in the toilets before the Friday maths class.
3. She teaches maths at a secondary school — the same school they went to. Everyone laughs at the irony.
1. Genuinely happy — they immediately share small private memories and exchange numbers within 10 minutes.
2. Yes — she went from hating maths to teaching it, and she says she 'became the boring adult I promised never to be'.
1. ages
2. would
3. used to
4. use to

Quiz

1. (B) used to
2. (A) would
3. (B) Did you use to smoke?
4. (A) study a huge amount last-minute
5. (B) didn't use to

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Answer key — Workbook

1. Vocabulary recall

1. Open answer — check with your teacher.
2. Open answer.
3. Open answer.

2. Grammar practice · used to / would for past habits

1. Model answer — see class notes.
2. Model answer — see class notes.
3. Model answer — see class notes.
4. Model answer — see class notes.
5. Open answer.

3. Reading recall

1. Open answer — around 15 words.
2. Open answer.
3. Open answer — 2 sentences.

4. Listening · a follow-up dialogue

1. Model: both speakers compare their own experience of work & study.
2. Open answer — look for specific detail and full sentences.
3. Open answer — see transcript.

6. Reflection

1. Open answer.
2. Open answer — be specific: what, when, how often.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class